

PRESS RELEASE
12 October 1988

ALGERIAN MILITARY REGIME SLAUGHTERS ITS OWN PEOPLE

In a statement issued today, the London-based Islamic Council expressed grave concern and anxiety about the large-scale killing of Algerian people by the military. Those killed belonged to groups of people demonstrating against the host of problems which have been making their lives unbearable.

According to reliable reports, the military, using tanks, artillery, heavy machine guns and other deadly weapons of war, has already killed more than 500 men, women and children. They have also arrested thousands, including children, and are reported to be planning to try them by special military courts.

Reporters have blamed the demonstrations on serious food shortages, skyrocketing prices, widespread unemployment and acute housing shortage. These are indeed some of the important problems which people are facing, but that is not all. There are other serious issues which are agitating the minds of the people. These include the one-party system, denial of basic human rights, dominance of secular rather than Islamic principles governing state policies and programmes, and social injustice which has created two classes in Algeria - the haves and the have-nots. An example of this: while the common man does not even have simple drinking water, the government last year imported 50 % more Scotch whisky than the year before for the affluent class. (The Times, 10 October 1988).

The statement said that the ferocity with which the actual military regime in Algeria had cracked down on the Algerian people was reminiscent of the French brutalities during the Algerian revolution, with the difference that now the rulers are slaughtering their own citizens.

In his Monday address, Benjedid threw a hint of civil war in Algeria.

The Islamic Council statement pointed out that it is well-known that the people of Algeria are fully united in their shared sufferings and know their goals. They also know who are the people who have betrayed the great Algerian revolution and who have remained true to it.

The Council expressed its confidence that the brave people of Algeria will emerge victorious from their heroic struggle and will realise their hopes and aspirations.